

THE  
DEFENCE OF  
Poetrie.

By Sir Phillip Sidney,  
Knight.



LONDON

Printed for *W*illiam Ponsonby.

1595.



THE  
TECHNICAL

OF THE  
SILVER

LONDON

W. & A. GILBERT





# An Apologie for P O E T R I E.

**W**Hen the right vertuous  
Edward VVotton, & I, were  
at the Emperors Court to-  
gether, wee gaue our selues  
to learne horsemanship of  
*John Pietro Pugliano* : one  
that with great commenda-  
tion had the place of an Esquire in his stable. And  
hee, according to the fertillnes of the Italian wit,  
did not onely afoord vs the demonstration of his  
practise, but sought to enrich our mindes with  
the contemplations therein, which hee thought  
most precious. But with none I remember mine  
eares were at any time more loden, then when  
(either angred with slowe paiement, or mooued  
with our learner-like admiration,) he exercised  
his speech in the prayse of his facultie. Hee sayd,  
Souldiours were the noblest estate of mankinde,  
B. and

*Jo: Pietro  
Pugliano.*

*Prayse of  
Souldiers &  
Horsemen.*



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and horsemen, the noblest of Souldiours. Hee sayde, they were the Maisters of warre, and ornaments of peace: speedy goers, and strong abiders, triumphers both in Camps & Courts. Nay, to so vnbeleeued a poynt hee proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a Prince, as to be a good horseman. Skill of gouernment, was but a Pedanteria in comparison: the would hee adde certaine prayses, by telling what a peerlesse beast a horse was. The onely seruicceable Courtier without flattery, the beast of most beutie, faithfulness, courage, and such more, that if I had not beene a peece of a Logician before I came to him, I think he would haue perswaded mee to haue wished my selfe a horse. But thus much at least with his no few words hee draue into me, that selfe-loue is better then any guilding to make that seeme gorgeous, wherein our selues are parties. VVherin, if *Pugliano* his strong affection and weake arguments will not satisfie you, I wil giue you a neerer example of my selfe, who (I knowe not by what mischance) in these my not old yeres & idelest times, hauing slipt into the title of a Poet, am prouoked to say something vnto you in the defence of that my vnelected vocation, which if I handle with more good will then good reasons, beare with me, sith the scholler is to be pardoned that foloweth the steppes of his Maister. And yet I must say, that as I haue iust cause to make a pittiful defence of poore Poetry,

*Horsemanship  
commendeth Princes.*

*Praise of Horses.*

*Philautia.*

*Poetry, dis-  
famed.*



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etry, which from almost the highest estimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughingstocke of children. So haue I need to bring some more auaileable proofes: sith the former is by no man barred of his deserued credite, the silly latter hath had euen the names of Philosophers vsed to the defacing of it, with great danger of ciuill war among the Muses. And first, truly to al thē that professing learning inueigh against Poetry, may iustly be obiected, that they goe very neer to vngratfulnes, to seek to deface that, which in the noblest nations & languages that are knowne, hath been the first light-giuer to ignorance, and first Nurse, whose milk by little & little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges: & will they now play the Hedghog, that being receiued into the den, draue out his host? or rather the Vipers, that with theyr birth kill their Parents? Let learned Greece in any of her manifold Sciences, be able to shew me one booke, before *Musæus*, *Homer*, & *Hesiodus*, all three nothing els but Poets. Nay, let any historie be brought, that can say any VVriters were there before thē, if they were not men of the same skil, as *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and some other are named: who hauing beene the first of that Country, that made pens deliuerers of their knowledge to their posterity, may iustly challenge to bee called their Fathers in learning: for not only in time they had this priority (although in it self antiquity be venerable,) but went before them,

*Antiquity of Poet.*

*Poetrix the first  
to bring to light  
& Nurser  
in all Nations.*



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them, as causes to drawe with their charming sweetnes, the wild vntamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as *Amphion* was sayde to moue stones with his Poetrie, to build Thebes. And *Orpheus* to be listened to by beastes, indeed, stony and beastly people. So among the Romans were *Liuius*, *Andronicus*, and *Ennius*. So in the Italian language, the first that made it aspire to be a Treasure-house of Science, were the Poets *Dante*, *Boccace*, and *Petrarch*. So in our English were *Gower* and *Chawcer*.

After whom, encouraged and delighted with theyr excellent fore-going, others haue followed, to beautifie our mother tongue, as wel in the same kinde as in other Arts. This did so notably shewe it selfe, that the Phylosophers of Greece, durst not a long time appeare to the worlde but vnder the masks of Poets. So *Thales*, *Empedocles*, and *Parmenides*, sange their naturall Philosophie in verses: so did *Pythagoras* and *Phocilides* their morral counsells: so did *Tirteus* in war matters, & *Solon* in matters of policie: or rather, they beeing Poets, dyd exercise their delightful vaine in those points of highest knowledge, which before them lay hid to the world. For that wise *Solon* was directly a Poet, it is manifest, hating written in verse, the notable fable of the Atlantick Iland, which was continued by *Plato*.

And truely, euen *Plato*, whosoever well considereth, shall find, that in the body of his work, though

Philosophers  
Poets.

Pythagoras.

Solon.

Plato.



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though the inside & strength were Philosophy, the skinn as it were & beautie, depended most of Poetrie: for all standeth vpon Dialogues, wherein he faineth many honest Burgesses of Athens to speake of such matters, that if they had been sette on the racke, they would neuer haue confessed them. Besides, his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacie of a walke, with enterlacing meere tales, as *Giges Ring*, and others, which who knoweth not to be flowers of Poetrie, did neuer walke into *Apollos Garden*.

And euen Historiographers, (although theyr lippes founde of things doone, & veritie be written in theyr fore-heads,) haue been glad to borrow both fashion, and perchance weight of Poets. So *Herodotus* entituled his Historie, by the name of the nine Muses: and both he and all the rest that folloved him, either stole or surped of Poetrie, their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battailles, which no man could affirme: or if that be denied me, long Orations put in the mouthes of great Kings and Captaines, which it is certaine they neuer pronounced. So that truely, neyther Philosopher nor Historiographer, coude at the first haue entered into the gates of populer iudgements, if they had not taken a great passport of Poetry, which in all Nations at this day wher learning flourisheth, not, is plaine to be seene, in all which they haue

*Historians  
aided by Poetrie.*

*Herodotus.*



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some feeling of Poetry. In Turkey, besides their lawe-giuing Diuines, they haue no other VVriters but Poets. In our neighbour Countrey Ireland, where truelie learning goeth very bare, yet are they Poets held in a deuoute reuerence. Euen among the most barbarous and simple Indians where no writing is, yet haue they their Poets, who make and sing songs which they call *Areytos*, both of theyr Auncestors deedes, & praises of theyr Gods. A sufficient probabilitie, that if euer learning come among the, it must be by hauing theyr hard dull wits softned and sharpened with the sweete delights of Poetrie. For vntill they find a pleasure in the exercises of the minde, great promises of much knowledge, will little perswade them; that knowe not the frutes of knowledge. In VVales, the true remnant of the auncient Brittons, as there are good authorities to shewe the long time they had Poets, which they called *Bardes*: so thorough all the conquests of Romaines, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, some of whom did seeke to ruine all memory of learning from among them, yet doo their Poets euen to this day, last; so as it is not more notable in soone beginning then in long continuing. But since the Authors of most of our Sciences were the Romans, and before them the Greekes, let vs a little stand vppon their authorities, but euen so farre as to see, what names they haue giuen vnto this now scorned skill.

Among



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Among the Romans a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a Diuiner, Fore-seer, or Prophet, as by his conioyned wordes *Vaticinium* & *Vaticinari*, is manifest: so heauenly a title did that excellent people bestow vpon this hart-rauishing knowledge. And so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chaunceable hitting vpon any such verses, great fore-tokens of their following fortunes were placed. VVhereupon grew the worde of *Sortes Virgiliane*, when by suddaine opening *Virgil's* booke, they lighted vpon any verse of hys making, whereof the histories of the Emperors liues are full: as of *Albinus* the Gouvernour of our Iland, who in his childe-hoode mette with this verse,

*Arma amens capio nec sat rationis in armis.*

And in his age performed it, which although it were a very vaine, and godles superstition, as also it was to think that spirits were commaunded by such verses, whereupon this word charmes, deriued of *Carmina* commeth, so yet serueth it to shew the great reuerence those wits were helde in. And altogether not without ground, since both the Oracles of *Delphos* and *Sibillas* prophecies, were wholly deliuered in verses. For that same exquisite obseruing of number and measure in words, and that high flying liberty of conceit proper to the Poet, did seeme to haue some diuine force in it,

And

*The diuers names  
given to poets  
Vates.*

*Sortes Virgi-  
liane.*

*Charmes.*



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*Dauids  
Psalmes.*

And may not I presume a little further, to shew the reasonableness of this worde *Vates*? And say that the holy *Dauids* Psalmes are a diuine Poem? If I doo, I shall not do it without the testimonie of great learned men, both auncient & moderne: but euen the name Psalmes will speake for mee, which being interpreted, is nothing but songes. Then that it is fully written in meeter, as all learned Hebricians agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Lastly & principally, his handling his prophecy, which is meerely poetical. For what els is the awaking his musicall instruments? The often and free changing of persons? His notable *Prosopopeias*, whē he maketh you as it were, see God comming in his Maiestie. His telling of the Beasts ioyfulness, and hills leaping, but a heauenlie poesie: wherein almost hee sheweth himselfe a passionate louer, of that vnspeakable and euermlasting beautie to be seene by the eyes of the minde, onely cleared by fayth. But truly nowe hauing named him, I feare mee I seeme to prophane that holy name, applying it to Poetrie, which is among vs throwne downe to so ridiculous an estimation: but they that with quiet iudgements will looke a little deeper into it, shall finde the end and working of it such, as beeing rightly applyed, deserueth not to bee scourged out of the Church of God.

*Maker.*

But now, let vs see how the Greekes named it, and howe they deemed of it. The Greekes called



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called him a Poet, which name, hath as the most excellent, gone thorough other Languages. It cometh of this word *Poiein*, which is, to make: wherein I know not, whether by lucke or wisdom, wee Englishmen haue mette with the Greekes, in calling him a maker: which name, how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were knowne by marking the scope of other Sciences, then by my partiall allegation.

There is no Arte deliuered to mankinde, that hath not the workes of Nature for his principall object, without which they could not consist, & on which they so depend, as they become Actors and Players as it were, of what Nature will haue set fourth. So doth the Astronomer looke vpon the starres, and by that hee seeth, setteth downe what order Nature hath taken therein. So doe the Geometrician, & Arithmetician, in their diuerse sorts of quantities. So doth the Musitian in times, tel you which by nature agree, which not. The naturall Philosopher thereon hath his name, and the Morrell Philosopher standeth vpon the naturall vertues, vices, and passions of man; and followe Nature (saith hee) therein, & thou shalt not erre. The Lawyer sayth what men haue determined. The Historian what men haue done. The Grammarian speaketh onely of the rules of speech, and the Rethorician, and Logitian, considering what in Nature will soonest proue and perswade, thereon giue artificial rules, which still

C.

are

*Artes obiect  
Nature.*

*The subject  
of  
Astronomie.*

*Geometrie.  
Arithmetique.*

*Natural  
Philosophie.  
Morrell.*

*Lawe.  
Historie.  
Grammar.  
Rhetorique.  
Logique.*



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*Philisike.*

*Metaphisike.*

*Poetrie.*

*Poetrie dis-  
uereth all im-  
perfection, &  
transcendeth  
the boundes  
of Nature.*

are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The Philisition waigheth the nature of a mans bodie, and the nature of things helpful, or hurtfull vnto it. And the Metaphisick, though it be in the seconde and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernaturall: yet doth hee indeede builde vpon the depth of Nature: onely the Poet, disdayning to be tied to any such subiection, lifted vp with the vigor of his owne inuention, dooth growe in effect, another nature, in making things either better then Nature bringeth forth, or quite a newe formes such as neuer were in Nature, as the *Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies*, & such like: so as hee goeth hand in hand with Nature, not inclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging onely within the Zodiack of his owne wit.

Nature neuer set forth the earth in so rich raptury, as diuers Poets haue done, neither with pleasant riuers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers: nor whatsoeuer els may make the too much loued earth more louely. Her world is brasen, the Poets only deliuer a golden: but let those things alone and goe to man, for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her vttermost cunning is imployed, and knowe whether shee haue brought forth so true a louer as *Theagines*, so constant a friende as *Pilades*, so valiant a man as *Orlando*, so right a Prince as *Xenophons Cyrus*: so excel-



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excellent a man euery way, as *Virgils Aeneas*: nei-  
ther let this be iestingly conceiued, because the  
works of the one be essentiall: the other, in imi-  
tation or fiction: for any vnderstanding know-  
eth the skil of the Artificer, standeth in that *Idea*  
or fore-conceite of the work, & not in the work  
it selfe. And that the Poet hath that *Idea*, is ma-  
nifest, by deliuering them forth in such excellen-  
cie as hee hath imagined them. VVhich deliue-  
ring forth also, is not wholie imaginatiue, as we  
are wont to say by them that build Castles in the  
ayre: but so farre substantially it worketh, not  
onely to make a *Cyrus*, which had been but a par-  
ticuler excellencie, as Nature might haue done,  
but to bestow a *Cyrus* vpon the worlde, to make  
many *Cyrus's*, if they wil learne aright, why, and  
how that Maker made him.

Neyther let it be deemed too sawcie a com-  
parison to ballance the highest poynt of mans  
wit with the efficacie of Nature: but rather giue  
right honor to the heauenly Maker of that ma-  
ker: who hauing made man to his owne likenes,  
set him beyond & ouer all the workes of that se-  
cond nature, which in nothing hee sheweth so  
much as in Poetrie: when with the force of a di-  
uine breath, he bringeth things forth far surpas-  
sing her dooings, with no small argument to the  
incredulous of that first accursed fall of *Adam*:  
with our erected wit, maketh vs know what per-  
fection is, and yet our infected will, keepeth vs

*Man made  
master of all  
the other workes  
of Nature, &  
he excelleth.*



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from reaching vnto it. But these arguments wil by fewe be vnderstood, and by fewer granted. Thus much (I hope) will be giuen me, that the Greekes with some probabilitie of reason, gaue him the name aboue all names of learning. Now let vs goe to a more ordinary opening of him, that the trueth may be more palpable: and so I hope, though we get not so vnmatched a praise as the Etimologie of his names will grant, yet his very description, which no man will denie, shall not iustly be barred from a principall commendation.

*Poetris w<sup>t</sup>.*

*3. Kindes of  
Poetrie.*

*1. Diuine.*

Poesie therefore is an arte of imitation, for so *Aristotle* termeth it in this word *Mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfetting, or figuring soorth: to speake metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight; of this haue beene three seuerall kindes. The chiefe both in antiquitie & excellencie, were they that did imitate the inconceiuable excellencies of GOD. Such were, *Dauid* in his Psalmes, *Salomon* in his song of Songs, in his Ecclesiastes, and Prouerbs: *Moses* and *Deborah* in theyr Hymnes, and the writer of *Iob*; which beside other, the learned *Emanuel Tremelius*, & *Franciscus Iunius*, doe entitle the poetickall part of the Scripture. Against these none will speake that hath the holie Ghost in due holy reuerence.

In this kinde, though in a full wrong diuinitie, were *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, *Homer* in his hymnes,  
and



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and many other, both Greekes and Romaines: and this Poesie must be vsed, by whosoeuer will follow *S. Iames* his counsell, in singing Psalmes when they are merry: and I knowe is vsed with the fruite of comfort by some, when in sorrowfull pangs of their death-bringing sinnes, they find the consolation of the neuer-leauing goodnesse.

The second kinde, is of them that deale with matters Philosophicall; eyther morrall, as *Virtus*, *Phocilides*, and *Cato*, or naturall, as *Lucretius*, and *Virgils Georgicks*: or Astronomicall, as *Mamilius*, & *Pontanus*: or historical, as *Lucan*: which who mislike, the faulte is in their iudgements quite out of taste, and not in the sweet foode of sweetly vttered knowledge. But because this second sorte is wrapped within the folde of the proposed subiect, and takes not the course of his owne inuention, whether they properly be Poets or no, let Gramarians dispute: and goe to the thyrd, indeed right Poets, of whom chiefly this question ariseth; betwixt whom, & these second is such a kinde of difference, as betwixt the meane sort of Painters, (who counterfet onely such faces as are sette before them,) and the more excellent: who hauing no law but wit, bestow that in cullours vpon you which is fittest for the eye to see: as the constant, though lamenting looke of *Lucretia*, when she punished in her selfe anothers fault.

2. Philosophical.  
fowerfold.  
Morrall.  
Naturall.  
Astronomical.  
Historical.

3. Makers.



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. . . VVherein he painteth not *Lucracia* whom he  
 neuer sawe, but painteth the outwarde beauty of  
 such a vertue: for these third be they which most  
 properly do imitate to, teach and delight, and to  
 imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath been,  
 or shall be: but range onely rayned with learned  
 discretion, into the diuine consideration of what  
 may be, and should be. These bee they, that as  
 the first and most noble sorte, may iustly bee ter-  
 med *Vates*, for these are waited on in the excellent  
 languages and best vnderstandings, with the fore  
 described name of Poets: for these indeede doo  
 # meere make to imitate: and imitate both to de-  
 # light to teach: and delight to moue men to take  
 # that goodnes in hande; which without delight  
 # they would flye as from a stranger. And teach, to  
 # make them know that goodnes whereunto they  
 are moued, which being the noblest scope to  
 which euer any learning was directed, yet want  
 there not idle tongues to barme at them. These  
 be subdiuided into sundry more speciall denomi-  
 nations. The most notable bee the *Heroick*, *Li-*  
*rick*, *Tragick*, *Comick*, *Satirick*, *Iambick*, *Elegi-*  
*ack*, *Pastorall*, and certaine others. Some of  
 # these being termed according to the matter they  
 # deale with, some by the sorts of verses they liked  
 # best to write in; for indeede the greatest part of  
 Poets haue apparelled their poetical inuentions  
 in that humblest kinde of writing which is cal-  
 led verse: indeed but apparelled, verse being but  
 an

*Vates.*

*The sixe  
kinds there  
of.*

*Verse.*



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an ornament and no cause to Poetry: for there  
haue beene many most excellent Poets, that ne-  
uer versified, and nowe swarme many versifiers  
that neede neuer aunswere to the name of Poets.  
For *Xenophon*, who did imitate so excellently, as  
to giue vs *effigiem iusti imperij*, the portraiture of  
a iust Empire vnder the name of *Cyrus*, (as *Cicero*  
sayth of him) made therein an absolute heroicall  
Poem.

*Xenophon.*

So did *Heliodorus* in his sugred intencion of  
that picture of loue in *Theagines* and *Cariclea*,  
and yet both these writ in Prose: which I speak  
to shew, that it is not riming and versing that ma-  
keth a Poet, no more then a long gowne maketh  
an Aduocate: who though he pleaded in armor  
should be an Aduocate and no Souldier. But it  
is that fayning notable images of vertues, vices, or  
what els, with that delightfull teaching which  
must be the right describing note to know a Poet  
by: although indeed the Senate of Poets had  
chosen verse as their fittest rayment, meaning, as  
in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to goe  
beyond them: not speaking (table talk fashion  
or like men in a dreame,) words as they chance-  
ably fall from the mouth, but peyzing each syllable  
of each worde by iust proportion according  
to the dignitie of the subiect.

*Heliodorus.*

*Verse. 3*  
*Limnoc. 3*

Nowe therefore it shall not bee amisse first to  
waigh this latter sort of Poetrie by his works, &  
then by his partes, and if in neyther of these A-  
natomies



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*Learnings effects.*

*The most noble  
knowledge tea-  
cheth a man to  
know himselfe  
and his owne  
weaknes.*

*The originall  
of Sciences.*

*Astronomie.*

*Natural Philo-  
sophie.*

*Musicke.*

*Mathematicks.*

natomies hee be condemnable, I hope wee shall obtaine a more fauourable sentence. This purifying of wit, this enriching of memory, enabling of iudgment, and enlarging of conceyt, which comonly we call learning, vnder what name soeuer it com forth, or to what immediat end soeuer it be directed, the final end is, to lead & draw vs to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules made worle by theyr clayey lodgings, can be capable of. This according to the inclination of the man, bred many formed impressions, for some that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high and heavenly, as acquaintance with the starres, gaue themselves to Astronomie; others, perswading themselves to be *Demi-gods* if they knewe the causes of things, became naturall and supernaturall Philosophers, some an admirable delight drew to Musicke: and some, the certainty of demonstration, to the Mathematickes. But all, one, and other, hauing this scope to knowe, and by knowledge to lift vp the mind from the dungeon of the body, to the enjoying his owne diuine essence. But when by the ballance of experience it was found, that the Astronomer looking to the starres might fall into a ditch, that the enquiring Philosopher might be blinde in himselfe, and the Mathematician might draw foorth a straight line with a crooked hart: then loe, did prooue the ouertuler of opinions, make manifest, that



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that all these are but serving Sciences, which as they haue each a private end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistress Knowledge, by the Greekes called *Arkitektōnikē*, which stands, (as I thinke) in the knowledge of a mans selfe, in the Ethicke and politick consideration, with the end of well dooing and not of well knowing onely; euen as the Sadlers next end is to make a good saddle: but his farther end, to serue a nobler facultie, which is horsemanship, so the horsemans to souldiery, and the Souldier not onely to haue the skill, but to performe the practise of a Souldier: so that the ending end of all earthly learning, being vertuous action, those skilles that most serue to bring forth that, haue a most iust title to bee Princes ouer all the rest: wherein if wee can shewe the Poets noblenes, by setting him before his other Competitors, among whom as principall challengers step forth the morall Philosophers, whom me thinketh, I see comming towards mee with a fullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by day light, rudely clothed for to witnes outwardly their cōtempt of outward things, with bookes in their hands agaynst glory, whereto they sette theyr names, sophistically speaking against subtilty, and angry with any man in whom they see the foule fault of anger; these men casting larges as they goe, of Definitions, Diuisions, and Distinctions, with a scornefull interrogatiue, doe soberly

*Architectonick*

*Ethicke.*

*Vertuous  
action.*

*The morall  
Philosopher.*

D.

berly



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berly aske, whether it bee possible to finde any path, so ready to leade a man to vertue, as that which teacheth what vertue is? and teacheth it not onely by deliuering forth his very being, his causes, and effects: but also, by making known his enemie vice, which must be destroyed, and his combersome seruant Pasion, which must be maistered, by shewing the generalities that con-  
tayneth it, and the specialities that are deriued from it. Lastly, by playne setting downe, how it extendeth it selfe out of the limits of a mans own little world, to the gouernment of families, and maintayning of publique societies.

*The Historian.*

The Historian, scarcely giueth leysure to the Moralist, to say so much, but that he loden with old Mouse-eaten records, authorising himselfe (for the most part) vpon other histories, whose greatest authorities, are built vpon the notable foundation of Heare-say, hauing much a-doe to accord differing VVriters, and to pick trueth out of partiality, better acquainted with a thousande yeeres a goe, then with the present age: and yet better knowing how this world goeth, the how his owne wit runneth; curious for antiquities, and inquisitiue of nouelties, a wonder to young folkes, and a tyrant in table talke, denieth in a great chafe, that any man for teaching of vertue, and vertuous actions, is comparable to him. I am *Lux vita, Temporum magistra, Vita memoria, Nuncia vetustatis. &c.*

The



## FOR POETRIE.

The Phylosopher (sayth hee) teacheth a disputatiue vertue, but I doe an a<sup>ctiue</sup> : his vertue is excellent in the dangerlesse Academie of *Plato*, but mine sheweth foorth her honorable face, in the battailes of *Marathon*, *Pharsalia*, *Poitiers*, and *Agincourt*. Hee teacheth vertue by certaine abstract considerations, but I onely bid you follow the footing of them that haue gone before you. Olde-aged experience, goeth beyond the fine-witted Phylosopher, but I giue the experience of many ages. Lastly, if he make the Song-booke, I put the learners hand to the Lute: and if hee be the guide, I am the light.

Then woulde hee alledge you innumerable examples, confirming storie by storie, how much the wisest Senatours and Princes, haue beene directed by the credite of history, as *Bru- tus*, *Alphonfus* of *Aragon*, and who not, if neede bee? At length, the long lyne of theyr disputation maketh a poynt in thys, that the one giueth the precept, and the other the example.

Nowe, whom shall wee finde (sith the question standeth for the highest forme in the Schoole of learning,) to bee Moderator? True-  
lie, as mee seemeth, the Poet; and if not a Moderator, even the man that ought to carrie the title from them both, and much more from all other seruing Sciences. Therefore compare we the Poet with the Historian, and with the Mor-  
rall Phylosopher; and, if hee goe beyond them

*Poetrie excelleth  
both the mery  
Philosophie and  
Historie, in tea-  
ching vertuous  
lectures.*



## AN APOLOGIE

*Diuinitie.*

both, no other humane skill can match him. For as for the Diuine, with all reuerence it is euer to be excepted, not only for hauing his scope as far beyonde any of these, as eternitie exceedeth a moment, but euen for passing each of these in themselves.

*Lawe.*

And for the Lawyer, though *Ius* bee the Daughter of Iustice, and Iustice the chiefe of Vertues, yet because hee seeketh to make men good, rather *Formidine pœna*, then *Virtutis amore*, or to say righter, dooth not indeuour to make men good, but that their euill hurt not others: hauing no care so hee be a good Cittizen, how bad a man he be. Therefore, as our wickednesse maketh him necessarie, & necessitie maketh him honorable, so is hee not in the deepest trueth to stande in rancke with these; who all indeuour to take naughtines away, and plant goodnesse euen in the secretest cabinet of our soules. And these foure are all, that any way deale in that consideration of mensmanners, which beeing the supreme knowledge, they that best breed it, deserue the best commendation.

*Comparison of  
Dostrie with  
moralitye &  
Historie.*

The Philosopher therefore and the Historian, are they which would win the goale: the one by precept, the other by example. But both not hauing both, doe both halte. For the Philosopher, setting downe with thorny argument the bare rule, is so hard of vtterance, and so mistie to bee conceiued, that one that hath no other guide but him,



## FOR POETRYE.

him; shall wade in him till hee be soyle, before he shall finde sufficient cause to bee honest; for his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and generall, that happie is that man who may vnderstande him; and more happie, that can applye what hee hath vnderstande.

On the other side, the Historian wanting the precept, is so tyed; not to what shoulde bee, but to what is; to the particuler truth of things, and not to the generall reason of things; that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a lesse fruitlesse doctrine.

Nowe dooth the perfect Poet performe both: for whatsoever the Philosopher sayth shoulde be doone; hee giveth a perfect picture of it in some one; by whom hee presupposeth it was doone. So as hee coupleth the generall notion with the particuler example. A perfect picture I say, for hee yeeldeth to the powers of the minde, an image of that whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a woordly description: which dooth neyther strike, pierce, nor possesse the sight of the soule, so much as that other dooth.

For as in outward things; to a man that had neuer seene an Elephant or a Rinoeros, who should tell him most exquisitely all theyr shapes, cullour bignesse, and perticular markes: or of a gorgeous Pallace, the Architecture, with declaring the full beauties, might well make the hea-



## AN APOLOGIE

not able to repress as it were by rote, all hee had  
 heard, yet should neuer satisfie his inward con-  
 ceits, with being witnes to it selfe of a true liuely  
 knowledge: but the same man, as soone as hee  
 might see those beasts well painted, or the house  
 wel in moddel, should straightwaies grow with-  
 out need of any description, to a iudiciall cōpre-  
 hending of them, so no doubt the Philosopher  
 with his learned definition, bee it of vertue, vi-  
 ces, matters of publick policie, or priuat govern-  
 ment, replenisheth the memory with many in-  
 fallible grounds of wisdom: which notwithstanding,  
 lye dark before the imaginative and iudg-  
 ing powre, if they bee not illuminated or figured  
 forth by the speaking picture of Poesie.

Thus take much paynes and many times not  
 without poeticall helpes, to make vs knowe the  
 force loue of our Countrey hath in vs. Let vs  
 but heare old *Nachises* speaking in the middest of  
*Troies* flames, or see *Ulysses* in the fulnes of all  
*Calippo's* delights, bewaile his absence from bar-  
 raine and beggerly *Ithaca*. Anger the *Stoicks* say,  
 was a short maddesse, let but *Sophocles* bring you  
*Ajax* on a stage, killing and whipping Sheepe &  
 Oxen, thinking them the Army of Greeks, with  
 theyr Chieftaines *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*,  
 and tell mee if you haue not a more familiar in-  
 sight into anger, then finding in the Schoolemen  
 his Cause and difference. See whether wisdom  
 and temperance in *Ulysses* and *Diomedes*, nature in  
*Achilles*,

Loue of our  
Countrey.

Anger or  
Furie.



## FOR POETRYE

*Achilles*, friendship in *Nisus*, and *Eurialus*, euen to an ignoraunt man, carry not an apparent shyning: and contrarily, the remorse of conscience in *Oedipus*, the soone repenting pride in *Agamemnon*, the selfe-deuouring crueltie in his Father *Atrous*, the violence of ambition in the two *Theban* brothers, the sowre-sweetnes of reuenge in *Medea*, and to fall lower, the *Terentian Gnat*, and our *Chaucers* *Pandar*, so exprest, that we nowe vse their names to signifie their trades. And finally, all vertues, vices, and passions, so in their own naturall seates layd to the viewe, that we seeme not to heare of them, but cleerely to see through them. But euen in the most excellent determination of goodnes, what Philosophers counsell can so redily direct a Prince, as the fayned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*? or a vertuous man in all fortunes, as *Aeneas* in *Virgill*? or a whole Common-wealth, as the way of *Sir Thomas Moores* *Utopia*? I say the way, because where *Sir Thomas Moore* erred, it was the fault of the man and not of the Poet, for that way of patterning a Common-wealth was most absolute, though hee perchaunce hath not so absolutely perfourmed it: for the question is, whether the fayned image of Poosie, or the regular instruction of Philosophy, hath the more force in teaching: wherein if the Philosophers haue more rightly shewed themselves Philosophers, then the Poets haue obtained to the high top of their profession, as in truth,

*Medio.*



## AN APOLOGIE

~~Non Dii, non homines, non concessere Columna~~  
**Non Dii, non homines, non concessere Columna**  
 It is I say againe, not the fault of the Art, but  
 that by fewe men that Arte can bee accompli-  
 shed. Certainly; euen our Sauour Christ could as  
 well haue giuen, the morrall common places of  
 vncharitablenes and humblenes, as the diuine  
 narration of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: or of disobedi-  
 ence and mercy; as that heauenly discourse of the  
 lost Child and the gracious Father; but that hys  
 through-searching wisdom, knewe the estate of  
*Dives* burning in hell, and of *Lazarus* being in *A-*  
*brahams* bosome, would more constantly (as it  
 were;) inhabit both his memory and iudgment.  
 Truly, for my selfe; mee seemes I see before my  
 eyes the lost Childes disdainfull prodigality, tur-  
 ned to enuie a Swines dinner: which by the lear-  
 ned Diuines, are thought not historicall acts, but  
 instructing Fables. For conclusion, I say the  
 Philosopher teacheth, but he teacheth obscure-  
 ly; so as the learned onely can vnderstande him:  
 that is to say, he teacheth them that are already  
 taught; but the Poet is the foode for the tender-  
 est stomacks; the Poet is indeed the right Popu-  
 lar Philosopher, whereof *Aesops* tales giue good  
 prooffe: whose pretty Allegories, stealing vnder  
 the formall tales of Beastes, make many, more  
 beastly then Beasts, begin to heare the sound of  
 vertue from these dumbe speakers.

But



## FOR POETRIE.

But now may it be alledged, that if this imagining of matters be so fitte for the imagination, then must the Historian needs surpasse, who bringeth you images of true matters, such as indeede were doone, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to haue been doone. Truly *Aristotle* himselfe in his discourse of Poetrie, plainly determineth this question, saying, that Poetry is *Philosophoteron*, and *Spoudaioteron*, that is to say, it is more Philosophicall, and more studiously serious, thē history. His reason is, because Poetrie dealeth with *Katholon*, that is to say, with the vniuersall consideration; and the history with *Katbekaston*, the perticuler; nowe sayth he, the vniuersall wayes what is fit to bee sayd or done, eyther in likelihood or necessity, (which the Poetrie cōsidereth in his imposed names,) & the perticuler, onely marke, whether *Alcibiades* did, or suffered, this or that. Thus farre *Aristotle*: which reason of his, (as all his) is most full of reason. For indeed, if the question were whether it were better to haue a perticular acte truly or falsly set down: there is no doubt which is to be chosen, no more thē whether you had rather haue *Vespasians* picture right as hee was, or at the Painters pleasure nothing resembling. But if the question be for your owne vse & learning, whether it be better to haue it set downe as it should be, or as it was: then certainly is more doctrinable the fained *Cirus* in *Xenophon* then the true

E.

*Cyrus*

*Poetrie excell-  
eth Historie  
both in teaching  
& delight.*



## AN APOLOGIE

*Cyrus* in *Iustine*: and the fayned *Aeneas* in *Virgil*, then the right *Aeneas* in *Dares Phrygius*.

As to a Lady that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace, a Painter should more benefite her to portraite a most sweet face, wryting *Canidia* vpon it, then to paynt *Canidia* as she was, who *Horace* sweareth, was foule and ill fauoured.

If the Poet doe his part a-right, he will shew you in *Tantalus*, *Atreus*, and such like, nothing that is not to be shunned. In *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, *Ulysses*, each thing to be followed; where the Historian, bound to tell things as things were, cannot be liberall (without hee will be poetically) of a perfect patterne: but as in *Alexander* or *Scipio* himselfe, shew dooings, some to be liked, some to be disliked. And then how will you discern what to followe but by your owne discretion, which you had without reading *Quintus Curtius*? And whereas a man may say, though in vniuersall consideration of doctrine the Poet preuaileth; yet that the historie, in his saying such a thing was doone, doth warrant a man more in that hee shall follow.

The answer is manifest, that if hee stande vpon that was; as if hee should argue, because it rayned yesterday, therefore it shoulde rayne to day, then indeede it hath some aduantage to a grosse conceite: but if hee know an example onlie, informes a coniectured likelihood, & so goe by



## FOR POETRIE.

by reason, the Poet dooth so farre exceede him, as hee is to frame his example to, that which is most reasonable: be it in warlike, politick, or private matters; where the Historian in his bare *Vvas*, hath many times that which wee call fortune, to ouer-rule the best wisdomie. Manie times, he must tell euents, whereof he can yeelde no cause: or if hee doe, it must be poeticall; for that a fayned example, hath asmuch force to teach, as a true example: (for as for to moue, it is cleere, sith the fayned may bee tuned to the highest key of passion,) let vs take one example, wherein a Poet and a Historian doe concur.

*Herodotus* and *Iustine* do both testifie, that *Zopyrus*, King *Darius* faithfull seruant, seeing his Maister long resisted by the rebellious *Babylonians*, fayned himselfe in extreame disgrace of his King: for verifying of which, he caused his own nose and eares to be cut off: and so flying to the *Babylonians*, was receiued: and for his knowne valour, so far credited, that hee did finde meanes to deliuer them ouer to *Darius*. Much like matter doth *Liue* record of *Tarquinius* and his sonne. *Xenophon* excellently faineth such another stratageme, performed by *Abradates* in *Cyrus* behalfe. Now would I fayne know, if occasion bee presented vnto you, to serue your Prince by such an honest dissimulation, why you doe not as well learne it of *Xenophons* fiction, as of the others verity: and truely so much the better, as you shall



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saue your nose by the bargain: for *Abradates* did not counterfet so far. So then the best of the Historian, is subiect to the Poet; for whatsoever action, or faction, whatsoever counsell, pollicy, or warre stratagem, the Historian is bound to recite, that may the Poet (if he list) with his imitation make his own; beautifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it pleaseth him: hauing all, from *Dante* his heauen, to hys hell, vnder the authoritie of his penne. VVhich if I be asked what Poets haue done so, as I might well name some, yet say I, and say againe, I speak of the Arte, and not of the Artificer.

Nowe, to that which commonly is attributed to the prayse of histories, in respect of the notable learning is gotten by marking the successe, as though therein a man should see vertue exalted, and vice punished. Truly that commendation is peculiar to Poetrie, and farre of from History. For indeede Poetrie euer setteth vertue so out in her best cullours, making Fortune her wel-wayting hand-mayd, that one must needs be enamored of her. VVell may you see *Ulysses* in a storme, and in other hard plights; but they are but exercises of patience & magnanimitie, to make them shine the more in the neere-following prosperitie. And of the contrarie part, if euill men come to the stage, they euer goe out (as the Tragedie VVriter answered, to one that misliked the shew of such persons) so manacled, as they little ani-  
of



## FOR POETRIE.

mate folkes to followe them. But the Historian, beeing captiued to the trueth of a foolish world, is many times a terror frō well dooing, and an encouragement to vnbrideled wickednes.

For, see wee not valiant *Milciades* rot in his fetters? The iust *Phocion*, and the accomplished *Socrates*, put to death like Traytors? The cruell *Seuerus* liue prosperously? The excellent *Seuerus* miserably murthered? *Sylla* and *Marius* dying in theyr beddes? *Pompey* and *Cicero* slaine then, when they would haue thought exile a happinesse?

See wee not vertuous *Cato* driuen to kyll himselfe? and rehell *Cesar* so aduaunced, that his name yet after 1600. yeeres, lasteth in the highest honor? And marke but euen *Cesars* own words of the fore-named *Sylla*, (who in that onely did honestly, to put downe his dishonest tyrannie,) *Literas nesciuit*, as if want of learning caused him to doe well. Hee meant it not by Poetrie, which not content with earthly plagues, deuiseeth new punishments in hel for Tyrants: nor yet by Philosophie, which teacheth *Occidendos esse*, but no doubt by skill in Historie: for that indeede can affoord you *Cipselus*, *Periander*, *Phalaris*, *Dionisius*, and I know not how many more of the same kennell, that speede well enough in theyr abominable vniustice or vsurpation. I conclude therefore, that hee excelleth Historie, not onely in furnishing the minde with knowledge, but in



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setting it forward, to that which deserueth to be called and accounted good : which setting forward, and moouing to well dooing, indeed setteth the Lawrell crowne vpon the Poet as victorious, not onely of the Historian, but ouer the Phylosopher : howsoeuer in teaching it may bee questionable.

For suppose it be granted, (that which I suppose with great reason may be denied,) that the Philosopher in respect of his methodical proceeding, doth teach more perfectly then the Poet : yet do I thinke, that no man is so much *Philosophos*, as to compare the Philosopher in moouing, with the Poet.

And that moouing is of a higher degree then teaching, it may by this appeare : that it is wel nigh the cause and the effect of teaching. For who will be taught, if hee bee not mooued with desire to be taught ? and what so much good doth that teaching bring forth, (I speak still of morrall doctrine) as that it moueth one to doe that which it dooth teach ? for as *Aristotle* sayth, it is not *Gnosis*, but *Praxis* must be the fruit. And howe *Praxis* cannot be., without being mooued to practise, it is no hard matter to consider.

The Philosopher sheweth you the way, hee informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediousnes of the way, as of the pleasant lodging you shall haue when your journey is ended, as of the many by-turnings that may diuert you  
from



## FOR POETRIE.

from your way. But this is to no man but to him that will read him, and read him with attentive studious painfulnes. VVhich constant desire, whosoever hath in him, hath already past halfe the hardnes of the way, and therefore is beholding to the Philosopher but for the other halfe. Nay truely, learned men have learnedly thought, that where once reason hath so much over-masted passion, as that the minde hath a free desire to doe well, the inward light each minde hath in it selfe, is as good as a Philosophers booke; seeing in nature we know it is wel, to doe well, and what is well, and what is euill, although not in the words of Arte, which Philosophers bestowe vpon vs. For out of naturall conceit, the Philosophers drew it, but to be moued to doe that which wee know, or to be moued with desire to knowe, *Hoc opus: Hic labor est.* Nowe therein of all Sciences, (I speak still of humiane, & according to the humane conceits) is our Poet the Monarch. For he dooth not only show the way, but giueth so sweete a prospect into the way, as will intice any man to enter into it. Nay, he dooth as if your iourney should lye through a fayre Vineyard, at the first giue you a cluster of Grapes: that full of that taste, you may long to passe further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubt.



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doubtfulnesse: but hee commeth to you with words set in delightfull proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for the well inchaunting skill of Musicke; and with a tale forsooth he commeth vnto you: with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner. And pretending no more, doth intende the winning of the mind from wickednesse to vertue: euen as the childe is often brought to take most wholsom things, by hiding them in such other as haue a pleasant tast: which if one should beginne to tell them, the nature of *Aloes*, or *Rubarb* they shoulde receiue, woulde sooner take their Phisicke at their eares, then at their mouth. So is it in men, (most of which are childish in the best things, till they bee cradled in their graues,) glad they will be to heare the tales of *Hercules*, *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, and *Aeneas*: and hearing them, must needs heare the right description of wisdom, valure, and iustice; which, if they had been barely, that is to say, Philosophically set out, they would sweare they bee brought to schoole againe.

That imitation wherof Poetry is, hath the most conueniency to Nature of all other, in so much, that as *Aristotle* sayth, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruell battailes, vn-naturall Monsters, are made in poetickall imitation delightfull. Truly, I haue knowen men, that euen with reading *Amadis de Gaule*, (which God knoweth



## FOR POETRIE.

knoweth wanteth much of a perfect Poesie,) haue found their harts mooued to the exercise of courtesie, liberalitie, and especially courage.

VVho readeth *Aeneas* carrying olde *Anchises* on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perfourme so excellent an acte? VVhom doe not the words of *Turnus* mooue? (the tale of *Turnus*, hauing planted his image in the imagination,)

———— *Fugientem hac terra videbit,*

*Vsque adeone mori miserum est?* ———

VVhere the Philosophers, as they scorne to delight, so must they bee content little to mooue: sauing wrangling, whether Vertue bee the chiefe, or the onely good: vvhether the contemplatiue, or the actiue life doe excell: vvhich *Plato* and *Boetius* well knew, and therefore made Mistres Philosophy, very often borrow the masking rayment of Poesie. For euen those harde harted euill men, who thinke vertue a schoole name, and knowe no other good, but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the Philosopher, and feele not the inward reason they stand vpon; yet will be content to be delighted: which is al, the good fellow Poet seemeth to promise: and so steale to see the forme of goodnes (which seen they cannot but loue,) ere themselues be aware, as if they tooke a medicine of Cherries. Infinite proofes of the strange effects of this poetickall inuention might

F.

bee



## AN APOLOGIE

be alledged, onely two shall serue, which are so often remembred, as I thinke all men knowe them.

The one of *Menenius Agrippa*, who when the whole people of Rome had resolutely deuided themselves from the Senate, with apparant shew of viter ruine: though hee were (for that time) an excellent Oratour, came not among them, vpon trust of figuratiue speeches, or cunning insinuations: and much lesse, with farre fet *Maximes* of Phylosophie, which (especially if they were *Platonick*;) they must haue learned Geometrie before they could well haue cōceiued: but forsooth he behaues himselfe, like a homely, and familiar Poet. Hee telleth them a tale, that there was a time, when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conspiracie against the belly, which they thought deuoured the fruits of each others labour: they cōcluded they would let so vnprofitable a spender stand. In the end, to be short, (for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale,) with punishing the belly, they plagued themselves. This applied by him, wrought such effect in the people, as I neuer read, that euer words brought forth but then, so suddaine & so good an alteration: for vpon reasonable conditions, a perfect reconcilement ensued. The other is of *Nathan* the Prophet, who whē the holie *David* had so far forsaken God, as to confirme adulterie with murther: when hee was to doe the tenderest



## FOR POETRIE.

rest office of a friende, in laying his owne shame before his eyes, sent by God to call againe so chosen a seruant: how doth he it? but by telling of a man, whose beloued Lambe was vngratefullie taken from his bosome: the applycation most diuinely true, but the discourse it selfe, fayned: which made *David*, (I speake of the second and instrumentall cause,) as in a glasse, to see his own filthines, as that heauenly Psalme of mercie wel testifieth.

By these therefore examples and reasons, I think it may be manifest, that the Poet with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually, then any other Arte dooth, and so a conclusion not vnfitlie ensueth: that as vertue is the most excellent resting place for all worldlie learning to make his end of: so Poetrie, beeing the most familiar to teach it, and most princelie to moue towards it, in the most excellent work, is the most excellent workman. But I am content, not onely to descipher him by his workes, (although works in commendation or dispraise, must euer holde an high authority,) but more narrowly will examine his parts: so that (as in a man) though altogether may carry a presence ful of maiestie & beautie, perchance in some one defectious peece, we may find a blemish: now in his parts, kindes, or *Species*, (as you list to terme the) it is to be noted, that some Poesies haue coupled together two or three kindes, as Tragicall



## AN APOLOGIE

and Comickall, wher-vpon is risen, the Tragi-comickall. Some in the like manner haue mingled Prose and Verse, as *Sanazzar* and *Boetius*. Some haue mingled matters Heroicall & Pastorall. But that commeth all to one in this question, for if seuered they be good, the coniunction cannot be hurtfull. Therefore perchance forgetting some, & leauing some as needlesse to be remembered, it shall not be amisse in a worde to cite the speciall kindes, to see what faults may be found in the right vse of them.

Is it then the Pastorall Poem which is misliked? (for perchance, where the hedge is lowest, they will soonest leape ouer.) Is the poore pype disdained, which sometime out of *Melibeuus* mouth, can shewe the miserie of people, vnder hard Lords, or rauening Souldiours? And again, by *Titirus*, what blessednes is deriued to them that lye lowest from the goodnesse of them that sit highest? Sometimes, vnder the prettie tales of VVolues and Sheepe, can include the whole considerations of wrong dooing and patience. Sometimes shew, that contention for trifles, can get but a trifling victorie. VVhere perchance a man may see, that euen *Alexander* and *Darius*, when they straue who should be Cocke of thys worlds dunghill, the benefit they got, was, that the after-liuers may say,

*Hac memini & victum frustra contendere Thirsin:  
Ex illo Coridon, Coridon est tempore nobis.*

Or



13  
FOR POETRIE.

Or is it the lamenting Elegiack, which in a kinde hart would mooue rather pittie the blame, who bewailes with the great Philosopher *Heraclitus*, the weakenes of man-kind, and the wretchednes of the world: who surely is to be pray-sed, either for compassionate accompanying iust causes of lamentation, or for rightly paynting out how weake be the passions of wofulnesse. Is it the bitter, but wholsome Iambick, which rubs the galled minde, in making shame the trumpet of villanie, with bolde & open crying out against naughtines? Or the Satirick, who

*Omne vafer vitium, ridenti tangit amico.*

VVho sportingly neuer leaueth, vntil hee make a man laugh at folly, and at length ashamed, to laugh at himselfe: which he cannot auoyd, without auoyding the follie. VVho while

*Circum praeordia ludit,*

giueth vs to feele, howe many head-aches a passionate life bringeth vs to. How whe all is done,

*Est ulubris animus si nos non deficit equus.*

No, perchance it is the Comick, whom naughty Play-makers and Stage-keepers, haue iustly made odious. To the argument of abuse, I will answer after. Onely thus much now is to be said, that the Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth, in the most ridiculous & scornfull sort that may be. So as it is impossible, that any beholder can be content to be such a one.



## AN APOLOGIE

Now, as in Geometry, the oblique must bee knowne as wel as the right: and in Arithmetick, the odde as well as the even, so in the actions of our life, who seeth not the filthines of euil, wanteth a great foile to perceiue the beauty of vertue. This doth the Comedy handle so in our priuate & domestical matters, as with hearing it, we get as it were an experience, what is to be looked for of a nigardly *Demea*: of a crafty *Danius*: of a flattering *Gnato*: of a vaine glorious *Thraso*: and not onely to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be such, by the signifying badge giuen them by the Comedian. And little reason hath any man to say, that men learne euill by seeing it so set out: sith as I sayd before, there is no man liuing, but by the force truethe hath in nature, no soöner seeth these mē play their parts, but wisheth thē in *Pistrinū*: although perchance the sack of his owne faults, lye so behinde hys back, that he seeth not himselfe daunce the same measure: whereto, yet nothing can more open his eyes, then to finde his own actions contemptibly set forth. So that the right vse of Comedy will (I thinke) by no body be blamed, and much lesse of the high and excellent Tragedy, that openeth the greatest wounds, and sheweth forth the Vicers, that are couered with Tissue: that maketh Kings feare to be Tyrants, and Tyrants manifest their titanicall humors: that with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration,

on,



## FOR POETRIE.

on, teacheth, the vncertainety of this world, and vpon howe weake foundations gilden roofes are builded. That maketh vs knowe,

*Qui sceptra saeuis, duro imperio regit,  
Timet timentes, metus in authorem redit.*

But how much it can mooue, *Plutarch* yeeldeth a notable testimonie, of the abhominable Tyrant, *Alexander Pheraus*; frō whose eyes, a Tragedy wel made, and represented, drewe abundance of teares: who without all pittie, had murdered infinite numbers, and some of his owne blood. So as he, that was not ashamed to make matters for Tragedies, yet coulde not resist the sweet violence of a Tragedie.

And if it wrought no further good in him, it was, that he in despight of himselfe, withdrewe himselfe from harkening to that, which might mollifie his hardened hart. But it is not the Tragedy they doe mislike: For it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoever is most worthy to be learned. Is it the Liricke that most displeaseth; who with his tuned Lyre, and wel accorded voyce, giueth praise, the reward of vertue, to vertuous acts? who giues morrall precepts, and naturall Problemes, who sometimes rayseth vp his voice to the height of the heauens, in singing the laudes of the immortal God. Certainly I must confesse my own barbarousnes, I neuer heard the olde song of *Percy* and *Duglas*, that I found not my heart mooued more



## AN APOLOGIE

more then with a Trumpet : and yet is it sung  
but by some blinde Crouder, with no rougher  
voyce, then rude stile : which being so euill ap-  
parrelled in the dust and cobwebbes of that vnciuill  
age, what would it worke trymmed in the  
gorgeous eloquence of *Pindar* ? In *Hungary* I  
haue seene it the manner at all Feasts, and other  
such meetings, to haue songes of their Aunce-  
stours valour ; which that right Souldier-like  
Nation thinck the chiefeest kindlers of braue cou-  
rage. The incomparable *Lacedemonians*, did not  
only carry that kinde of Musicke euer with them  
to the field, but euen at home, as such songs were  
made, so were they all content to bee the singers  
of them, when the lusty men were to tell what  
they dyd, the olde men, what they had done, &  
the young men what they wold doe. And where  
a man may say, that *Pindar* many times prayseth  
highly victories of small moment, matters rather  
of sport then vertue : as it may be answered, it  
was the fault of the Poet, and not of the Poetry ;  
so indeede, the chiefe fault was in the tyme and  
custome of the Greekes, who set those toyes at  
so high a price, that *Phillip* of *Macedon* reckoned  
a horse-race wonne at *Olimpus*, among hys three  
fearefull felicities. But as the vnimitable *Pindar*  
often did, so is that kinde most capable and most  
fit, to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idle-  
nes, to embrace honorable enterprises.

There rests the Heroicall, whose very name

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FOR POETRY.

(I thinke) should daunt all back-biters; for by what conceit can a tongue be directed to speake euill of that, which draweth with it, no lesse Champions then *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, *Turnus*, *Tidus*, and *Rinaldo*? who doth not onely teach and moue to a truth, but teacheth and mooueth to the most high and excellent truth. VVho maketh magnanimity and iustice shine, throughout all misty fearefulness and foggy desires. VVho, if the saying of *Plato* and *Tullie* bee true, that who could see *Vertue*, would be wonderfully rai-  
shed with the loue of her beauty: this man sets her out to make her more louely in her holyday apparell, to the eye of any that will daine, not to disdain, vntill they vnderstand. But if any thing be already sayd in the defence of sweete Poetry, all concurrerth to the maintaining the Heroicall, which is not onely a kinde, but the best, and most accomplished kinde of Poetry. For as the image of each action styrreth and instructerh the mind, so the lustie image of such VVorthies, most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy, and informes with counsel how to be worthy. Only let *Aeneas* be worne in the tablet of your memory, how he gouerneth himselfe in the ruine of his Country, in the preserving his old Father, & carrying away his religious ceremonies: in obeying the Gods commandement to leaue *Dido*, though not onely all passionate kindenes, but even the humane consideration of vertuous gratefulnes,

G. would



## A N A P O L O G I E

would haue craued other of him. How in storms, howe in sports, howe in warre, howe in peace, how a fugitiue, how victorious, how besiedged, how besiedging, howe to strangers, howe to allies, how to enemies, howe to his owne: lastly, how in his inward selfe, and how in his outward gouernment. And I thinke, in a minde not preiudiced with a preiudicating humor, hee will be found in excellencie fruitefull: yea, euen as *Horace* sayth,

*Melius Chrisippo et Crantore.*

But truely I imagine, it falleth out with these Poet-whypers, as with some good women, who often are sicke, but in fayth they cannot tel where. So the name of Poetrie is odious to the, but neither his cause, nor effects, neither the sum that containes him, nor the particularities descending from him, giue any fast handle to their carping dispraise.

Sith then Poetrie is of all humane learning the most auncient, & of most fatherly antiquitie, as frō whence other learnings haue taken theyr beginnings: sith it is so vniuersall, that no learned Nation dooth despise it, nor no barbarous Nation is without it: sith both Roman & Greek gaue diuine names vnto it: the one of prophesying, the other of making. And that indeede, that name of making is fit for him; considering, that where as other Arts retaine theselues within their subiect, and receiue as it were, their bee-  
ing



## FOR POETRIE.

ing from it: the Poet onely, bringeth his owne  
stuffe, and dooth not learne a conceite out of a  
matter, but maketh matter for a conceite: Sith  
neither his description, nor his ende, contayneth  
any euill, the thing described cannot be euil: Sith  
his effects be so good as to teach goodnes and to  
delight the learners: Sith therin, (namely in mor-  
rall doctrine, the chiefe of all knowledges,) hee  
dooth not onely farre passe the Historian, but for  
instructing, is well nigh comparable to the Phi-  
losopher: & for mouing, leaues him behind him:  
Sith the holy scripture (wherein there is no vn-  
cleannes) hath whole parts in it poeticall. And  
that euen our Saujour Christ, vouchsafed to vse  
the flowers of it: Sith all his kindes are not on-  
lie in their vnited formes, but in their seuered dis-  
sections fully commendable, I think, (& think I  
thinke rightly,) the Lawrell crowne appointed  
for tryumphing Captaines, doth worthilie (of al  
other learnings) honor the Poets tryumph. But  
because wee haue eares as well as tongues, and  
that the lightest reasons that may be, will seeme  
to weigh greatly, if nothing be put in the coun-  
ter-balance: let vs heare, and as well as wee can  
ponder, what obiections may bee made against  
this Arte, which may be worthy, eyther of yeel-  
ding, or answering.

First truely I note, not onely in these *Myse-  
monoi* Poet-haters, but in all that kinde of peo-  
ple, who seek a prayse by dispraying others, that



## AN APOLOGIE

they do prodigally spend a great many wand-  
ring wordes, in quips, and scoffes; carping and  
taunting at each thing; which by stirring the  
Spleene, may stay the braine from a through be-  
holding the worthines of the subject.

Those kinde obiectiōns, as they are full of  
very idle cañines, sith there is nothing of so sacred  
a maiestie, but that an itching tongue may rubbe  
it selfe vpon it: so deserue they no other answer,  
but in steed of laughing at the iester, to laugh at the  
iester. VVet know a playing wit, can prayse the  
discretion of an Affegrie, the comfortablenes of be-  
ing in debt, and the iolly commoditie of beeing  
sick of the plague. So of the contrary side, if we  
will turne *Omnia uerba*, *lib be* *ut latius uirtus, proximitate malis*,  
that good lye hid in heerenesse of the euill: *A*  
*grippa* will be as merke in shewing the vanitie of  
Science, as *Erasmus* was in commendeing of fol-  
lie. Neither shall any man or maier escape some  
touch of these snayling raylers. But for *Erasmus*  
and *Agrippa*, they had another foundation then  
the superficial part would promise. Many these  
other pleasant Fault-finders, who will correct the  
Verbe, before they vnderstand the Nōune, and  
confute others knowledge before they confirme  
theyr owne: I would haue them onely remem-  
ber, that scoffing cometh not of wisdom. So  
as the best title in the English they gette with  
their metriments, is to be called good fooles: For



## FOR POETRIE.

so haue our graue Fore-fathers euer termed that humorous kinde of iesters : but that which gyueth greatest scope to their scorning humors, is ryming and versing. It is already sayde, (and as I think, trulie sayde,) it is not ryming and versing, that maketh Poesie. One may bee a Poet without versing, and a versifyer without Poetry. But yet, presuppose it were inseparable (as indeede it seemeth *Scaliger* iudgeth,) trulie it were an inseparable cōmendation. For if *Oratio*, next to *Ratio*, Speech next to Reason, bee the greatest gyft bestowed vpon mortalitie: that can not be praiselesse, which dooth most polliish that blessing of speech, which considers each word, not only (as a man may say) by his forcible qualitie, but by his best measured quantitie, carrying euen in themselves, a Harmonie: (without (perchaunce) Number, Measure, Order, Proportion, be in our time growne odious.) But lay aside the iust prayse it hath, by being the onely fit speech for Musick, (Musick I say, the most diuine striker of the senses,) thus much is vndoubtedly true, that if reading bee foolish, without remembring, memorie being the onely treasurer of knowledge, those words which are fittest for memory, are likewise most convenient for knowledge.

Now, that Verse farre exceedeth Prose in the knitting vp of the memory, the reason is manifest. The words, (besides theyr delight which hath a



## AN APOLOGIE

great affinitie to memory,) beeing so set; as one word cannot be lost, but the whole worke failes: which accuseth it selfe, calleth the remembrance backe to it selfe, and so most strongly confirmeth it; besides, one word so as it were begetting another, as be it in ryme or measured verse, by the former a man shall haue a neere gesse to the follower: lastly, euen they that haue taught the Art of memory, haue shewed nothing so apt for it, as a certaine roome deuided into many places well and thoroughly knowne. Now, that hath the verse in effect perfectly: euery word hauing his naturall seate, which seate, must needes make the words remembred. But what needeth more in a thing so knowne to all men? who is it that euer was a scholler, that doth not carry away some verses of *Virgill*, *Horace*, or *Cato*, which in his youth he learned, and euen to his old age serue him for howrely lessons? but the fitness it hath for memory, is notably proued by all deliue-ry of Arts: wherein for the most part, from Gram-mer, to Logick, Mathematick, Phisick, and the rest, the rules chiefly necessary to bee borne a- way, are compiled in verses. So that, verse be- ing in it selfe sweete and orderly, and being best for memory, the onely handle of knowledge; it must be in iest that any man can speake against it. Nowe then goe wee to the most important im-putations laid to the poore Poets, for ought I can yet learne, they are these, first, that there beeing  
many



## FOR POETRIE.

many other more fruitfull knowledges; a man might better spend his tyme in them, then in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lyes. Thirdly, that it is the Nurse of abuse, infecting vs with many pestilent desires: with a Syrens sweetnes; drawing the mind to the Serpents tayle of sinfull fancy. And heerein especially, Comedies giue the largest field to erre, as *Chaucer* sayth: howe both in other Nations and in ours, before Poets did soften vs, we were full of courage, giuen to martiall exercises; the pillars of manlyke liberty, & not lulled a sleepe in shady idlenes with Poets pastimes. And lastly, and chiefly, they cry out with an open mouth, as if they had out shot *Robin Hood*, that *Plato* banished them out of hys Common-wealth. Truly, this is much, if there be much truth in it. First to the first: that a man might better spend his tyme, is a reason indeede: but it doth (as they say) but *Petere principium*: for if it be as I affirme, that no learning is so good, as that which teacheth and mooueth to vertue; and that none can both teach and moue thereto so much as Poetry: then is the conclusion manifest, that Incke and Paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose employed. And certainly, though a man should graunt their first assumption, it should followe (me thinkes) very vnwillingly, that good is not good, because better is better. But I still and vtterly denye, that there is sprong out of earth a more fruitfull know-



## AN APOLOGIE

2. knowledge. To the second therefore; that they should be the principall liars; I aunswere paradoxically, but truely, I thinke truely; that of all VVriters vnder the funne, the Poet is the least lier: and though he would, as a Poet can scarcely be a lyer, the Astronomer, with his cosen the Geometician, can hardly escape, when they take vpon them to measure the height of the starres.

How often, thinke you, doe the Phisitians lye, when they auer things, good for sicknesses; which afterwards send *Charon* a great number of soules drownd in a potion before they come to his Ferry. And no lesse of the rest, which take vpon them to affirme. Now, for the Poet, he nothing affirms; and therefore neuer lyeth. For, as I take it, to lye, is to affirme that to be true which is false. So as the other Artists, and especially the Historian, affirming many things, can in the cloudy knowledge of mankind, hardly escape from many lyes. But the Poet as (I sayd before) neuer affirmeth. The Poet neuer maketh any circles about your imagination, to coniure you to beleue for true what he writes. Hee citeth not authorities of other Histories, but euen for hys entry, calleth the sweete Muses to inspire into him a good inuention: in troth, not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be: and therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because hee telleth them not  
for



## FOR POETRIE.

for true, he lyeth not, without we will say, that *Nathan* lyed in his speech, before alledged to *David*. VVhich as a wicked man durst scarce say, so think I, none so simple would say, that *Esop* lyed in the tales of his beasts: for who thinks that *Esop* writ it for actually true, were well worthy to haue his name cronickled, among the beastes hee writeth of.

VVhat childe is there, that coming to a Play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great Letters vpon an olde doore, doth belecue that it is *Thebes*? If then, a man can ariue, at that childs age, to know that the Poets persons and dooings, are but pictures what should be, and not stories what haue beene, they will neuer giue the lye, to things not affirmatiuely, but allegorically, and figuratiuelie written. And therefore, as in Historie, looking for trueth, they goe away full fraught with falsehood: so in Poetrie, looking for fiction, they shal vse the narration, but as an imaginatiue ground-plot of a profitable inuention.

But heereto is replied, that the Poets gyue names to men they write of, which argueth a conceite of an actuall truth, and so, not beeing true, prooues a falsehood. And doth the Lawyer lye then, when vnder the names of *Iohn a stile*, and *Iohn a noakes*, hee puts his case? But that is easily answered. Theyr naming of men, is but to make theyr picture the more liuely, and not to builde any historie: paynting men, they cannot

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## AN APOLOGIE

leau men namelesse. VVe see we cannot play at Chesse, but that wee must giue names to our Chesse-men; and yet mee thinks, hee were a very partiall Champion of truth, that would say we lyed, for giuing a peece of wood, the reuerend title of a Bishop. The Poet nameth *Cyrus* or *Aeneas*, no other way, then to shewe, what men of theyr fames, fortunes, and estates, should doe.

3. Their third is, howe much it abuseth mens wit, trayning it to wanton sinfulness, and lustfull loue: for indeed that is the principall, if not the onely abuse I can heare alledged. They say, the Comedies rather teach, then reprehend, amorous conceits. They say, the Lirick, is larded with passionate Sonnets. The Elegiack, weepes the want of his Mistresse. And that euen to the Heroical, *Cupid* hath ambitiously climed. Alas Loue, I would, thou couldest as well defende thy selfe, as thou canst offende others. I would those, on whom thou doost attend, could eyther put thee away, or yeelde good reason, why they keepe thee. But grant loue of beautie, to be a beastlie fault, (although it be very hard, sith onely man, and no beast, hath that gyft, to discerne beauty.) Grant, that louely name of Loue, to deserue all hatefull reproches: (although euen some of my Maisters the Philosphers, spent a good deale of theyr Lamp-oyle, in setting forth the excellencie of it.) Grant, I say, what soeuer they wil haue granted; that not onely loue, but lust, but vanity,



## FOR POETRIE.

nitie, but, (if they list) scurrilitie, possesseth many leaues of the Poets bookes: yet thinke I, when this is granted, they will finde, theyr sentence may with good manners, put the last words foremost: and not say, that Poetrie abuseth mans wit, but that, mans wit abuseth Poetrie.

For I will not denie, but that mans wit may make Poesie, (which should be *Eikastike*, which some learned haue defined, figuring foorth good things,) to bee *Phantastike*: which doth contrariwise, infect the fancie with vnworthy obiects: As the Painter, that shoulde giue to the eye, eyther some excellent perspectiue, or some fine picture, fit for building or fortification: or contayning in it some notable example, as *Abraham*, sacrificing his Sonne *Isaack*, *Indith* killing *Holofernes*, *David* fighting with *Goliath*, may leaue those, and please an ill-pleased eye, with wanton shewes of better hidden matters. But what, shall the abuse of a thing, make the right vse odious? Nay truely, though I yeeld, that Poesie may not onely be abused, but that beeing abused, by the reason of his sweete charming force, it can doe more hurt then any other Armie of words: yet shall it be so far from concluding, that the abuse, should giue reproch to the abused, that contrariwise it is a good reason, that whatsoeuer being abused, dooth most harme, beeing rightly vsed: (and vpon the right vse each thing conceiueth his title,) doth most good.



## AN APOLOGIE

Doe wee not see the skill of Phisick, (the best rampire to our often-assaulted bodies,) beeing abused, teach poyson the most violent destroyer? Dooth not knowledge of Law, whose end is, to euen and right all things being abused, grow the crooked fosterer of horrible iniuries? Dooth not (to goe to the highest) Gods word abused, breed heresie? and his Name abused, become blasphemie? Truely, a needle cannot doe much hurt, and as truely, (with leaue of Ladies be it spoken) it cannot doe much good. VVith a sword, thou maist kill thy Father, & with a sword thou maist defende thy Prince and Country. So that, as in their calling Poets the Fathers of lyes, they say nothing: so in this theyr argument of abuse, they prooue the commendation.

4. They alledge heere-with, that before Poets beganne to be in price, our Nation, hath set their harts delight vpon action, and not vpon imagination: rather doing things worthy to bee written, then writing things fitte to be done. VVhat that before tyme was, I thinke scarcely *Sphinx* can tell: Sith no memory is so auncient, that hath the precedence of Poetrie. And certaine it is, that in our plainest homelines, yet neuer was the *Albion* Nation without Poetrie. Mary, thys argument, though it bee leaueld against Poetrie, yet is it indeed, a chaine-shot against all learning, or bookishnes, as they commonly tearme it. Of such minde were certaine *Gothes*, of whom it is written,



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written, that hauing in the spoile of a famous Citie, taken a fayre librarie; one hangman (bee like fitte to execute the fruites of their wits,) who had murthered a great number of bodies, would haue set fire on it: no sayde another, very grauely, take heede what you doe, for whyle they are busie about these toyes, wee shall with more leysure conquer their Countries.

This indeede is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance, and many wordes sometymes I haue heard spent in it; but because this reason is generally against all learning, aswell as Poetrie; or rather, all learning but Poetry: because it were too large a digression, to handle, or at least, to superfluous: (sith it is manifest, that all gouernment of action, is to be gotten by knowledg, and knowledge best, by gathering many knowledges, which is, reading,) I onely with *Horace*, to him that is of that opinion,

*Iubeo stultum esse libenter:*

for as for Poetrie it selfe, it is the freest from thys obiection. For Poetrie is the companion of Campes.

I dare vndertake, *Orlando Furioso*, or honest King *Arthur*, will neuer displease a Souldier: but the quiddity of *Ens*, and *Prima materia*, will hardely agree with a Corset: and therefore, as I said in the beginning, euen Turks and Tartares are delighted with Poets. *Homer* a Greek, flourished, before Greece flourished. And if to a slight



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coniecture, a coniecture may be opposed: truly it may seeme, that as by him, their learned men, tooke almost their first light of knowledge, so their active men, received their first motions of courage. Onlie *Alexanders* example may serue, who by *Plutarch* is accounted of such vertue, that Fortune was not his guide, but his foote-stoole: whose acts speake for him, though *Plutarch* did not: indeede, the Phænix of warlike Princes. This *Alexander*, left his Schoolemaister, liuing *Aristotle*, behinde him, but tooke deade *Homer* with him: he put the Philosopher *Calisthenes* to death, for his seeming philosophicall, indeed mutinous stubbornnes. But the chiefe thing he euer was heard to wish for, was, that *Homer* had been aliue. He well found, he received more brauerie of minde, by the patterne of *Achilles*, then by hearing the definition of Fortitude: and therefore, if *Cato* misliked *Fuluius*, for carying *Ennius* with him to the fielde, it may be answered, that if *Cato* misliked it, the noble *Fuluius* liked it, or els he had not doone it: for it was not the excellent *Cato Vticensis*, (whose authority I would much more haue reuerenced,) but it was the former: in truth, a bitter punisher of faults, but else, a man that had neuer wel sacrificed to the Graces. Hee misliked and cryed out vpon all Greeke learning, and yet being 80. yeeres olde, began to learne it. Be-like, fearing that *Plato* vnderstood not Latine. Indeeede, the Romaine lawes allowed, no person



## FOR POETRIE.

son to be carried to the warres, but hee that was in the Souldiers role : and therefore, though *Cato* misliked his vnmustered person, hee misliked not his worke . And if hee had , *Scipio Nasica* iudged by common consent, the best Romaine, loued him. Both the other *Scipio* Brothers, who had by their vertues no lesse surnames , then of *Asia*, and *Affrick*, so loued him, that they caused his body to be buried in their Sepulcher . So as *Cato*, his authoritie being but against his person, and that aunswered, with so farre greater then himselfe, is heerein of no validitie . But now indeede my burthen is great ; now *Plato* his name is layde vpon mee, whom I must confesse, of all Philosophers, I haue euer esteemed most worthy of reuerence, and with great reason : Sith of all Philosophers, he is the most poeticall . Yet if he will defile the Fountaine, out of which his flowing streames haue proceeded, let vs boldly examine with what reasons hee did it . First truly, a man might maliciously object, that *Plato* being a Philosopher, was a naturall enemy of Poets : for indeede, after the Philosophers, had picked out of the sweete misteries of Poetrie, the right discerning true points of knowledge, they forthwith putting it in method, & making a Schoole-arte of that which the Poets did onely teach, by a diuine delightfulnes, beginning to spurne at their guides, like vngratefull Prentises, were not content to set vp shops for themselves, but sought by  
all



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all meanesto discredit their Maisters. VVhich by the force of delight beeing barred them, the lesse they could ouerthrow them, the more they hated them. For indeede, they found for *Homer*, seauen Citties stroue, who should haue him for their Citizen: where many Citties banished Philosophers, as not fitte members to liue among them. For onely repeating certaine of *Euripides* verses, many *Athenians* had their lyues saued of the *Siracusians*: when the *Athenians* themselues, thought many Philosophers, vnwoorthie to liue.

Certaine Poets, as *Simonides*, and *Pindarus*, had so preuailed with *Hiero* the first, that of a Tiran they made him a iust King, where *Plato* could do so little with *Dionisius*, that he himselfe, of a Philosopher, was made a slaue. But who should doe thus, I confesse, should requite the obiections made against Poets, with like euillation against Philosophers, as likewise one should doe, that should bid one read *Phadrus*, or *Symposium* in *Plato*, or the discourse of loue in *Plutarch*, and see whether any Poet doe authorize abominable filthines, as they doe. Againe, a man might aske out of what Common-wealth *Plato* did banish them? insooth, thence where he himselfe alloweth communitie of women: So as be-like, this banishment grewe not for effeminate wanronnes, sith little should poeticall Sonnets be hurtfull, when a man might haue what woman



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man he lifted. But I honor philosophicall instructions, and blesse the wits which bred them: so as they be not abused, which is likewise stretched to Poetrie.

*S. Paule* himselfe, ( who yet for the credite of Poets) alledgeth twise two Poets, & one of them by the name of a Prophet, setteth a watch-word vpon Philosophy, indeede vpon the abuse. So dooth *Plato*, vpon the abuse, not vpon Poetrie. *Plato* found fault, that the Poets of his time, filled the worlde, with wrong opinions of the Gods, making light tales of that vnspotted essence; and therefore, would not haue the youth depraued with such opinions. Heerin may much be said, let this suffice: the Poets did not induce such opinions, but dyd imitate those opinions already induced. For all the Greek stories can well testifie, that the very religion of that time, stode vpon many, and many-fashioned Gods, not taught so by the Poets, but followed, according to their nature of imitation. VVho list, may reade in *Plutarch*, the discourses of *Isis*, and *Osiris*, of the cause why Oracles ceased, of the diuine prouidence: and see, whether the Theologie of that nation, stood not vpon such dreames, which the Poets indeed superstitiously obserued: and truly, (sith they had not the light of Christ,) did much better in it then the Philosophers, who shaking off superstition, brought in Atheisme. *Plato* therefore, ( whose authoritie I had much

I. rather



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rather iustly conſter, then vniuſtly reſiſt,) meant not in general of Poets, in thoſe words of which *Iulius Scaliger* ſaith, *Qua authoritate, barbari quidā, atque hispidi, abuti velint, ad Poetas republica exigendos*: but only meant, to driue out thoſe wrong opinions of the Deitie, (whereof now, without further law, Chriſtianity hath taken away all the hurtful beliefe,) perchance (as he thought) no-riſhed by the then eſteemed Poets. And a man neede goe no further then to *Plato* himſelfe, to know his meaning: who in his Dialogue called *Ion*, giueth high, and rightly diuine commendation to Poetrie. So as *Plato*, banishing the abuſe, not the thing, not banishing it, but giuing due honor vnto it, ſhall be our Patron, and not our aduerſarie. For indeed I had much rather, (ſith truly I may doe it) ſhew theyr miſtaking of *Plato*, (vnder whoſe Lyons ſkin they would make an Aſſe-like braying againſt Poetrie,) the goe about to ouer-throw his authority, whom the wiſer a man is, the more iuſt cauſe he ſhall find to haue in admiration: eſpecially, ſith he attributeth vnto Poetrie, more then my ſelfe doe; namely, to be a very inſpiring of a diuine force, farre aboue mans wit; as in the afore-named Dialogue is apparant.

Of the other ſide, who wold ſhew the honors, haue been by the beſt ſort of iudgemēt granted them, a whole Sea of examples woulde preſent themſelues. *Alexanders, Caſars, Scipios*, all fauorers  
of



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of Poets. *Lelius*, called the Romane *Socrates*, him selfe a Poet: so as part of *Heautontimorumenon* in *Terence*, was supposed to be made by him. And euen the Greek *Socrates*, whom *Apello* confirmed to be the onely wise man, is sayde to haue spent part of his old time, in putting *Esops* fables into verses. And therefore, full euill should it become his scholler *Plato*, to put such words in his Masters mouth, against Poets. But what need more? *Aristotle* writes the Arte of Poesie: and why if it should not be written? *Plutarch* teacheth the vse to be gathered of the, and how if they should not be read? And who reades *Plutarchs* eyther historie or philosophy, shall finde, hee trymmeth both theyr garments, with gards of Poesie. But I list not to defend Poesie, with the helpe of her vnderling, Historiography. Let it suffice, that it is a fit soyle for prayse to dwell vpon: and what dispraise may set vpon it, is eyther easily ouer-come, or transformed into iust commendation. So that, sith the excellencies of it, may be so easily, and so iustly confirmed, & the low-creeping objections, so soone troden downe; it not being an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine: not of effeminatenes, but of notable stirring of courage: not of abusing mans witte, but of strengthening mans wit: not banished, but honored by *Plato*: let vs rather plant more Laurels; for to engarland our Poets heads, (which honor of beeing laureat, as besides the, onely tryumphant Captaines weare,



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is a sufficient authority, to shewe the price they ought to be had in,) then suffer the ill-sauouring breath of such wrong-speakers, once to blowe vpon the cleere springs of Poesie.

But sith I haue runne so long a careere in this matter, me thinks, before I giue my penne a full stop, it shalbe but a little more lost time, to inquire, why England, (the Mother of excellent mindes,) should bee growne so hard a step-mother to Poets, vwho certainly in wit ought to passe all other: sith all onely proceedeth frō their wit, being indeede makers of themselves, not takers of others. How can I but exclaime,

*Musa mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso.*

Sweete Poesie, that hath aunciently had Kings, Emperors, Senators, great Captaines, such, as besides a thousand others, *Dauid, Adrian, Sophocles, Germanicus*, not onely to fauour Poets, but to be Poets. And of our neerer times, can present for her Patrons, a *Robert*, king of Sicil, the great king *Francis* of France, king *James* of Scotland. Such Cardinals as *Bembus*, and *Bibiena*. Such famous Preachers & Teachers, as *Beza* and *Melancthon*. So learned Philosophers, as *Fracastorius* and *Scaliger*. So great Orators, as *Pontanus* & *Muretus*. So piercing wits, as *George Buchanan*. So graue Counsellors, as besides many, but before all, that *Hospitall* of Fraunce: then whom, (I thinke) that Realme neuer brought forth a more accomplished iudgement: more firmly builded vpon vertue.



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vertue. I say these, with numbers of others, not onely to read others Poesies, but to poetise for others reading, that Poesie thus embraced in all other places, should onely finde in our time, a hard welcome in England, I thinke the very earth lamenteth it, and therfore decketh our Soyle with fewer Laurels then it was accustomed. For heeretofore, Poets haue in England also florished. And which is to be noted, euen in those times, when the trumpet of *Mars* did sounde loudest. And now, that an ouer-faint quietnes should seeme to strew the house for Poets, they are almost in as good reputation, as the *Mountibancks* at *Venice*. Truly euen that, as of the one side, it giueth great praise to Poesie, which like *Venus*, (but to better purpose,) had rather be troubled in the net with *Mars*, then enioy the homelie quiet of *Vulcan*: so serues it for a peece of a reason, why they are lesse gratefull to idle England, which nowe can scarce endure the payne of a pen. Vpon this, necessarily followeth, that base men, with seruile wits vndertake it: who think it inough, if they can be rewarded of the Printer. And so as *Epaminondas* is sayd, with the honor of his vertue, to haue made an office; by his exercising it, which before was contemptible, to become highly respected: so these, no more but setting their names to it, by their owne disgracefulnes, disgrace the most gracefull Poesie. For now, as if all the Muses were gotte with childe, to bring



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foorth bastard Poets, without any commission, they doe poste ouer the banckes of *Helicon*, tyll they make the readers more weary then Post-horses: while in the meane tyme, they

*Quæis meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan,*  
are better content, to suppress the out-flowing of their wit, then by publishing them, to bee accounted Knights of the same order. But I, that before euer I durst aspire vnto the dignitie, am admitted into the company of the Paper-blurbers, doe finde the very true cause of our wanting estimation, is want of desert: taking vpon vs to be Poets, in despite of *Pallas*. Nowe, wherein we want desert, were a thanke-worthy labour to expresse: but if I knew, I should haue mended my selfe. But I, as I neuer desired the title, so haue I neglected the meanes to come by it. Onely ouer-mastred by some thoughts, I yeelded an inckie tribute vnto them. Mary, they that delight in Poesie it selfe, should seeke to knowe what they doe, and how they doe; and especially, looke themselues in an vnflattering Glasse of reason, if they bee inclinable vnto it. For Poesie, must not be drawne by the cares, it must bee gently led; or rather, it must lead. VVhich was partly the cause, that made the auncient-learned affirme, it was a diuine gift, and no humaine skill: sith all other knowledges, lie ready for any that hath strength of witte: A Poet, no industrie can make, if his owne *Genius* bee not carried vnto it:  
and



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and therefore is it an old Prouerbe, *Orator fit; Poeta nascitur*. Yet confesse I alwayes, that as the firstest grounde must bee manured, so must the highest flying wit, haue a *Dedalus* to guide him. That *Dedalus*, they say, both in this, and in other, hath three wings, to beare it selfe vp into the ayre of due commendation: that is, Arte, Imitation, and Exercise. But these, neyther artificiall rules, nor imitatiue patternes, we much cumber our selues withall. Exercise indeede wee doe, but that, very fore-backwardly: for where we should exercise to know, wee exercise as hauing knowne: and so is our braine deliuered of much matter, which neuer was begottē by knowledge. For, there being two principal parts, matter to be expressed by wordes, and words to expresse the matter, in neyther, wee vse Arte, or Imitation, rightly. Our matter is *Quodlibet* indeed, though wrongly perfourming *Ouids* verse:

*(Quicquid conabor discere versus erit:)*

neuer marshalling it into an assured rancke, that almost the readers cannot tell where to finde themselves.

*Chancer*, vndoubtedly did excellently in hys *Troilus* and *Cresseid*; of whom, truly I know not, whether to meruaile more, either that he in that mistie time, could see so clearely, or that wee in this cleare age, walke so stumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fitte to be forgotten, in so reuerent antiquity. I account the *Mirror of Magi-*



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*Magistrates*, meetely furnished of beautiful parts: and in the Earle of Surries *Liricks*, many things tastig of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble minde. The *Sheapheards Kalender*, hath much Poetrie in his Eglogues: indeede worthy the reading if I be not deceiued. That same framing of his stile, to an old rustick language, I dare not alowe, sith neyther *Theocritus* in Greeke, *Virgill* in Latine, nor *Sanazar* in Italian, did affect it. Besides these, doe I not remember to haue seene but fewe, (to speake boldely) printed, that haue poeticall sinnewes in them: for prooffe whereof, let but most of the verses bee put in Prose, and then aske the meaning; and it will be found, that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first, what should be at the last: which becomes a confused masse of words, with a tingling sound of ryme, barely accompanied with reason.

Our Tragedies, and Comedies, (not without cause cried out against,) obseruing rules, neyther of honest ciuilitie, nor of skilfull Poetrie, excepting *Gorboduck*, (again, I say, of those that I haue seene,) which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches, and well sounding Phrases, clyming to the height of *Seneca* his stile, and as full of notable moralitie, which it doth most delightfully teach; and so obtayne the very end of Poesie: yet in troth it is very defectious in the circumstances; which greeueth mee, because it  
might



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might not remaine as an exact model of all Tragedies. For it is faulty both in place, & time, the two necessary companions of all corporall actions. For where the stage should alwaies represent but one place, and the vttermost time presupposed in it, should be, both by *Aristotles* precept, and common reason, but one day: there is both many dayes, and many places, inartificially imagined. But if it be so in *Gorboduck*, how much more in al the rest? where you shal haue *Asia* of the one side, and *Affrick* of the other, & so many other vnder-kingdoms, that the Player, when he cometh in, must euer begin with telling where he is: or els, the tale wil not be conceiued. Now ye shal haue three Ladies, walke to gather flowers, & then wee must beleue the stage to be a Garden. By & by, we heare newes of shipwracke in the same place, and then wee are to blame, if we accept it not for a Rock.

Vpon the backe of that, comes out a hidious Monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders, are bounde to take it for a Caue. VVhile in the meane-time, two Armies flye in, represented with foure swords and bucklers, & then what harde heart wil not receiue it for a pitched fielde? Now, of time they are much more liberall, for ordinary it is that two young Princes fall in loue. After many trauerces, she is got with childe, deliuered of a faire boy, he is lost, groweth a man, falls in loue, & is ready to get another child, and all this in two houres space: which how absurd it is

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in sence, euen sence may imagine, and Arte hath taught, and all auncient examples iustified: and at this day, the ordinary Players in Italie, wil not erre in. Yet wil some bring in an example of *Eunuchus* in *Terence*, that cōtaineth matter of two dayes, yet far short of twenty yeeres. True it is, and so was it to be playd in two daies, and so fitted to the time it ser forth. And though *Plautus* hath in one place done amisse, let vs hit with him, and not misse with him. But they wil say, how then shal we set forth a story, which containeth both many places, & many times? And doe they not knowe, that a Tragedie is tied to the lawes of Poesie, and not of Historie? not bound to follow the storie, but hauing liberty, either to faine a quite newe matter, or to frame the history, to the most tragicall conueniencie. Againe, many things may be told, which cannot be shewed, if they knowe the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As for example, I may speake, (though I am heere) of *Peru*, and in speech, digresse from that, to the discription of *Calicut*: but in action, I cannot represent it without *Pacolets* horse: and so was the manner the Auncients tooke, by some *Nuncius*, to recount thinges done in former time, or other place. Lastly, if they wil represent an history, they must not (as *Horne* saith) beginne *Ab ovo*: but they must come to the principall poynt of that one action, which they wil represent. By example this wil be best expressed. I haue a story of young *Polidorus*, deliuered  
for



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for safeties sake, with great riches ; by his Father *Priamus*, to *Polimnestor* king of *Thrace*, in the Trojan war time : Hee after some yeeres, hearing the ouer-throwe of *Priamus*, for to make the treasure his owne, murthereth the child : the body of the child is taken vp by *Hecuba*, shee the same day, findeth a slight to bee reuenged most cruelly of the Tyrant : where nowe would one of our Tragedy writers begin, but with the deliuey of the childe ? Then should he sayle ouer into *Thrace*, & so spend I know not how many yeeres, and trauaile numbers of places. But where dooth *Euripides* ? Euen with the finding of the body, leauing the rest to be tolde by the spirit of *Polidorus*. This need no further to be enlarged, the dullest wit may conceiue it. But besides these grosse absurdities, how all they Playes be neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies : mingling Kings & Clownes, not because the matter so carrieth it : but thrust in Clownes by head & shoulders, to play a part in maiesticall matters, with neither decencie, nor discretion. So as neither the admiration & commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mungrell Tragy-comedie obtained. I know *Apuleius* did some-what so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment : & I knowe, the Auncients haue one or two examples of Tragy-comedies, as *Plautus* hath *Amphitrio* : But if we marke them well, we shall find, that they neuer, or very daintily, match Horne-pypes and Funeralls.



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So falleth it out, that hauing indeed no right Comedy, in that comicall part of our Tragedy, wee haue nothing but scurrility, vnwoorthy of any chaste eares: or some extreame shew of doltishnes, indeed fit to lift vp a loude laughter, and nothing els: where the whole tract of a Comedy, shoulde be full of delight, as the Tragedy shoulde be still maintained, in a well raised admiration. But our Comedians, thinke there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet commeth it not of delight: as though delight should be the cause of laughter, but well may one thing breed both together: nay, rather in themselves, they haue as it were, a kind of contrarietie: for delight we scarcely doe, but in things that haue a conueniencie to our selues, or to the generall nature: laughter, almost euer commeth, of things most disproportioned to our selues, and nature. Delight hath a ioy in it, either permanent, or present. Laughter, hath onely a scornful tickling.

For example, we are rauished with delight to see a faire woman, and yet are far from being moued to laughter. VVee laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly we cannot delight. VVee delight in good chaunces, we laugh at mischaunces; we delight to heare the happines of our friends, or Country; at which he were worthy to be laughed at, that would laugh; wee shall contrarily laugh sometimes, to finde a matter quite mistaken, & goe  
downe



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downe the hill agaynst the byas, in the mouth of some such men, as for the respect of the, one shalbe hartely sorry, yet he cannot chuse but laugh; & so is rather pained, then delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not, but that they may goe well together, for as in *Alexanders* picture vwell set out, wee delight without laughter, & in twenty mad Anticks we laugh without delight: so in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard, and furious countenance, in a womans attire, spinning at *Omphales* commaundement, it breedeth both delight and laughter. For the representing of so strange a power in loue, procureth delight: and the scornfulnes of the action, stirreth laughter. But I speake to this purpose, that all the end of the comicall part, bee not vpon such scornfull matters, as stirreth laughter onely: but mixt with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of Poetrie. And the great fault even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainely by *Aristotle*, is, that they styrre laughter in sinfull things; which are rather execrable then ridiculous: or in miserable, which are rather to be pittied then scorned. For what is it to make folkes gape at a wretched Begger, or a beggerly Clowne? or against lawe of hospitallity, to iest at straungers, because they speake not English so well as wee doe? what doe we learne, sith it is certaine

(*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,*)

*Quā quod ridiculos homines facit.* —————

But rather a busy louing Courtier: a hartles threat-



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ning *Thraso*. A selfe-wise-seeming schoolemaster. A  
a wry-transformed Traueller. These, if wee sawe  
walke in stage names, which wee play naturally,  
therein were delightfull laughter, and teaching  
delightfulness: as in the other, the Tragedies of  
*Buchanan*, doe iustly bring forth a diuine admirati-  
on. But I haue laished out too many wordes of  
this play matter. I doe it because as they are excel-  
ling parts of Poetrie, so is there none so much vsed  
in England, & none can be more pittifully abused.  
VVhich like an vnmanerly Daughter, shewing  
a bad education, causeth her mother Poetries ho-  
nesty, to bee called in question. Other sorts of Po-  
etry almost haue we none, but that Lyricall kind of  
Songs and Sonnets: which, Lord, if he gaue vs so  
good mindes, how well it might be imployed, and  
with howe heavenly fruite, both priuate and pub-  
lique, in singing the prayses of the immortall beau-  
ty: the immortall goodnes of that God, who gy-  
ueth vs hands to write, and wits to conceiue, of  
which we might well want words, but neuer mat-  
ter, of which, we could turne our eies to nothing,  
but we should euer haue new budding occasions.  
But truly many of such writings, as come vnder  
the banner of vnresistable loue, if I were a Mistres,  
would neuer perswade mee they were in loue: so  
coldely they apply fiery speeches, as men that had  
rather red Louers writings, and so caught vp cer-  
taine swelling phrases, which hang together, like  
a man which once tolde mee, the winde was at  
North,



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North, VVest, and by South, because he would be sure to name windes enovve: then that in truth they feeie those passions, which easily (as I think) may be bewrayed, by that same forciblenes, or *Energia*, (as the Greekes call it) of the writer. But let this bee a sufficient, though short note, that wee misse the right vse of the materiall point of Poetrie.

Now, for the out-side of it, which is words, or (as I may tearme it) *Dictiō*, it is euē well worse. So is that honny-flowing Matron Eloquence, apparelled, or rather disguised, in a Curtizan-like painted affectation: one time with so farre fette words, that may seeme Monsters: but must seeme straungers to any poore English man. Another tyme, with coursing of a Letter, as if they were bound to followe the method of a Dictionary: an other tyme, with figures and flowers, extreame winter-starued. But I would this fault were only peculier to Versifiers, and had not as large possession among Prose-printers; and, (which is to be meruailed) among many Schollers; and, (which is to be pittied) among some Preachers. Truly I could wish, if at least I might be so bold, to wish in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity, the diligent imitators of *Tullie*, & *Demosthenes*, (most worthy to be imitated,) did not so much keep, *Ad libitum* an Paper-bookes of their figures and phrases, as by attentiuē translation (as it were) deuoure them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For, do we  
they



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they cast Sugar and Spice, vpon euery dish that is serued to the table; Like those Indians, not content to weare eare-rings at the fit & naturall place of the eares, but they will thrust Iewels through their nose, and lippes because they will be sure to be fine.

*Tullie*, when he was to driue out *Cateline*, as it were with a Thunder-bolt of eloquence, often vsed that figure of repition, *Viuu, viu?* *imo in Senatum venit &c.* Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, hee would haue his words (as it were) double out of his mouth: and so doeth that artificially, which we see men doe in choller naturally. And wee, hauing noted the grace of those words, haue them in sometime to a familier Epistle, when it were to too much choller to be chollerick. Now for similitudes, in certaine printed discourses, I thinke all Herbarists, all stories of Beasts, Foules, and Fishes, are rifled vp, that they come in multitudes, to waite vpon any of our conceits; which certainly is as absurd a surfet to the eares, as is possible: for the force of a similitude, not being to prooue any thing to a contrary Disputer, but onely to explaine to a willing hearer, when that is done, the rest is a most tedious pratling: rather ouer-swaying the memory from the purpose wher-to they were applyed, then any whit informing the iudgement, already eyther satisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied. For my part, I doe not doubt, when *Antonius* and *Crassus*, the great fore-fathers



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fathers of *Cicero* in eloquence, the one (as *Cicero* testifieth of them,) pretended not to know Arte, the other, not to set by it: because with a playne sensiblenes, they might win credit of popular eares: which credit, is the neereft step to perswasion: which perswasion, is the chiefe marke of Oratory; I doe not doubt (I say) but that they vsed these tracks very sparingly, which who doth generally vse, any man may see doth daunce to his owne musick: and so be noted by the audience, more careful to speake curiously, then to speake truly.

Vndoubtedly, (at least to my opinion vndoubtedly,) I haue found in diuers smally learned Courtiers, a more sounde stile, then in some professors of learning: of which I can gesse no other cause, but that the Courtier following that which by practise hee findeth fittest to nature, therein, (though he know it not,) doth according to Art, though not by Art: where the other, vsing Art to shew Art, and not to hide Art, (as in these cases he should doe) flyeth from nature, and indeede abuseth Art.

But what? me thinks I deserue to be pounded, for straying from Poetry to Oratorie: but both haue such an affinity in this wordish consideration, that I thinke this digression, will make my meaning receiue the fuller vnderstanding: which is not to take vpon me to teach Poets howe they should doe, but onely finding my selfe sick among

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the rest, to shewe some one or two spots: of the common infection, growne among the most part of V. Writers: that acknowledging our selues somewhat awry, we may bend to the right, vs both of matter and manner; whereto our language giueth vs great occasion, being indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it. I know; some will say it is a mingled language: And why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say it wanteth Grammer. Nay truly, it hath the prayse, that it wanteth not Grammer: for Grammer it might haue, but it needes it. not; beeing so easie of it selfe, & so voyd of those cumbersome differences of Cases, Genders, Moodes, and Tenses; which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of Babels curse; that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother tongue. But for the uttering sweetly, and properly the conceits of the minde, which is the end of speech; that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world; and is particularly happy, in compositions of two or three words together, neere the Greek, far beyond the Latine: which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

Now, of versifying there are two sorts, the one Auncient, the other Moderne; the Auncient marked the quantitie of each syllable, and according to that, framed his verse; the Moderne, observing onely number, & with some regard of the accent; the chiefe life of it standeth in that lyke

foun-



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founding of the words, which wee call Ryme. Whether of these be the most excellent, would beare many speeches. The Auncient, (no doubt) more fit for Musick, both words and tune observing quantity, and more fit lively to expresse diuers passions, by the low and lofty sounde of the well-weyed silable. The latter likewise, with hys Ryme, striketh a certaine musick to the eare: and in fine, sith it dooth delight, though by another way, it obtaines the same purpose: there beeing in eyther sweetnes, and wanting in neither maiestie. Truly the English, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts: for, for the Auncient, the Italian is so full of Vowels, that it must euer be cūbred with *Elisions*. The Dutch, so of the other side with Cōsonants, that they cannot yeeld the sweet slyding, fit for a Verse. The French, in his whole language, hath not one word, that hath his accent in the last silable, sauing two, called *Antepenultima*, and little more hath the Spanish: and therefore, very gracelesly may they vse *Dactiles*. The English is subiect to none of these defects.

Nowe, for the ryme, though wee doe not obserue quantity, yet wee obserue the accent very precisely: which other languages, eyther cannot doe, or will not doe so absolutely. That *Cesura*, or breathing place in the midst of the verse, neither Italian nor Spanish haue, the French, and we, neuer almost fayle of. Lastly, euen the very ryme it selfe, the Italian cannot put in the last silable,



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ble, by the French named the Masculine ryme, but still in the next to the last; which the French call the Female; or the next before that, which the Italians terme *Sdrucchiola*. The example of the former, is *Buono Suono*, of the *Sdrucchiola*, is *Femina Semina*. The French, of the other side, hath both the Male, as *Bon, Son*, and the Female, as *Plaise Taise*. But the *Sdrucchiola*, hee hath not: where the English hath all three, as *Due, True, Father, Rather, Motion, Potion*; with much more which might be sayd, but that I finde already, the triflingnes of this discourse, is much too much enlarged. So that sith the euer-praise-worthy Poesie, is full of vertue-breeding delightfulnes, and voyde of no gyfte, that ought to be in the noble name of learning: sith the blames laid against it, are either false, or feeble: sith the cause why it is not esteemed in Englande, is the fault of Poet-apes, not Poets: sith lastly, our tongue is most fit to honor Poesie, and to bee honored by Poesie, I coniure you all, that haue had the euill lucke to reade this incke-wasting toy of mine, euen in the name of the nyne Muses, no more to scorne the sacred misteries of Poesie: no more to laugh at the name of Poets, as though they were next inheritours to Fooles: no more to iest at the reuerent title of a Rymmer: but to beleue with *Aristotle*, that they were the auncient Treasurers, of the Gracians Diuinity. To beleue with *Bembus*, that they were first bringers in of all ciuilitie. To beleue with *Scaliger*,  
that



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that no Philosophers precepts can sooner make you an honest man, then the reading of *Virgill*. To belecue with *Clauserus*, the Translator of *Cornutus*, that it pleased the heauenly Deitie, by *Hesiod* and *Homer*, vnder the vayle of fables, to giue vs all knowledge, Logick, Rethorick, Philosophy, naturall, and morrall: and *Quid non*? To belecue with me, that there are many misteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written darkely, least by prophane wits, it should bee abused. To belecue with *Landin*, that they are so beloued of the Gods, that whatsoeuer they write, proceeds of a diuine fury. Lastly, to belecue themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortal, by their verses.

Thus doing, your name shal flourish in the Printers shoppes; thus doing, you shall bee of kinne to many a poetickall Preface; thus doing, you shall be most fayre, most rich, most wise, most all, you shall dwell vpon Superlatiues. Thus dooing, though you be *Libertino patre natus*, you shall suddenly grow *Herculeae proles*:

*Si quid mea carmina possunt.*

Thus doing, your soule shal be placed with *Dantes Beatrix*, or *Virgils Anchises*. But if, (fie of such a but) you be borne so neere the dull making *Cataphraet* of *Nilus*, that you cannot heare the Planet-like Musick of Poetrie, if you haue so earth-creeeping a mind, that it cannot lift it selfe vp, to looke to the sky of Poetry: or rather, by a certaine rusti-



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call disdain, will become such a Mome, as to be a *Momus* of Poetry: then, though I will not wish vnto you, the Asses cares of *Midas*, nor to bee driuen by a Poets verses, (as *Bubonax* was) to hang himselfe, nor to be rimed to death, as it is sayd to be doone in Ireland: yet thus much curse I must send you, in the behalfe of all Poets, that while you liue, you liue in loue, and neuer get fauour, for lacking skill of a *Sonnet*: and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an *Epi-  
taph*.

FINIS.



